

Paul Steals The Paddy Thunder

By ARGUS

Wycombe Wanderers 2, Tooting and Mitcham 1

FAREWELL PADDY HASTY. There are all too few personalities in the amateur game and even the most partisan Wycombe supporter felt just a trifle sentimental at Loakes Park on Saturday as Tooting's beguiling Irish international made his last-but-one appearance for his club before turning professional. But this was to be a Paul Bates connoisseur's tit-bit rather than a Hasty swan-song.

Both players have one thing in common — it is never safe to underestimate them for a fraction of a second.

Bates put Wycombe two goals ahead in the first 37 minutes, with one goal that was opportunism and poetry intermingled and the second, a real piece of goal-poaching of which a Jimmy Greaves would have been proud.

Alas for Tooting, Paddy Hasty — freshly bearded — should never have played. His unhealed ligaments injury made him suspect from the start. He was limping on the right wing before half-time and after collapsing in a tackle soon after the re-start took no more effective part in the game.

Considering this was an Isthmian battle between the champions and the runners-up of last season, this was a disappointing affair. The second half verged on boredom, with both teams looking laboured and scrappy.

DETERIORATED

Tooting, fielding only five of the men who took the title to Surrey, have deteriorated out of all recognition. They played some attractive soccer, particularly in the first half, but never looked like mounting a serious fight back.

A Wycombe defence has seldom met a more ineffective Tooting attack and I can remember only two occasions when goalkeeper Ken Brown was in real bother. He made a really superb

series of dives to stop Tooting leader Mike Clay from netting but was well beaten when Welshman Dave Roberts rapped Hasty's centre home, two minutes before half-time to make the score 2-1.

Ken's opposite number Wally Pearson had the busier afternoon, and was twice foxed cleverly by Bates. After 15 minutes Bates took Tomlin's pass wandered casually across the field and shot with such suddenness and venom that the entire Tooting defence was caught napping.

In the 37th minute Bates stood practically on the goal-line to head Rockell's centre, past a perplexed Pearson.

SELDOM HOSTILE

But Bates apart, the Wycombe attack seldom looked hostile. For once at least Tommy Holmes, who dashed to the ground belatedly did not catch up with events and was astray with his finishing. The right-wing faltered because inside-right Len Worley persisted in moth-into-flames tactics of dribbling into trouble, while Jack Tomlin had a poor game on the left.

The injury to Hasty stifled any possibility of a Tooting revival. They operated on one cylinder only for, with Clay well and truly in John Fisher's pocket, the left-wing was the only danger. As it was, Tooting never looked like cracking a dour, efficient home defence.